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ABSTRACT

The installation of an automated acquisitions system, the Innovacq 100, demanded a review and revision of procedures in the Acquisitions Department of the University of Central Florida Library. This practicum report describes the process involved in developing the new procedures. Prior to installation, the old departmental procedures manual and the Innovacq Manual were examined, and new procedures were proposed. After installation, the entire staff participated in developing and writing new procedures. These were revised by the department head, rewritten, and recorded on floppy disks using an Apple IIe microcomputer and Applewriter word processing program. The manual was printed, reviewed, revised, and corrected by all staff. The changes were entered, the manual was indexed, and a copy was printed for each department member. Individual portions were also printed, encased in plastic, and attached to the work stations where they are used. It was recommended that the manual be expanded as new procedures are developed, and revised as procedures change. New printouts are to be made of all affected pages when changes are made and used to replace the superseded pages in all extant manuals. This report comprises the following sections: Introduction; Background and Significance; Procedures; Results; Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations; and a seven-item bibliography. (Author/THC)

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DEVELOPING A PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR USING THE INNOVACQ 100 SYSTEM EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY

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A practicum report submitted in partial fulfillment
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Abstract

The installation of an automated acquisitions system, the Innovacq 100, demanded a review and revision of procedures in the Acquisitions Department of the University of Central Florida Library. Before installation, the old departmental procedures manual and the Innovacq Manual were examined, and new procedures proposed. After installation, the entire staff participated in developing and writing new procedures. These were revised by the Department Head, rewritten, and recorded on floppy disks using an Apple IIe microcomputer and Applewriter word processing program. The manual was printed, reviewed, revised and corrected by all staff. The changes were entered, the manual was indexed, and a copy printed for each department member. Individual portions were printed, encased in plastic, and attached to the work stations where they are used. It was recommended that the manual be expanded as new procedures were developed, and revised as procedures changed. New printouts were to be made of all affected pages when changes were made and used to replace the superseded pages in all extant manuals.

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Introduction:

The introduction of a new system into the work environment should trigger an examination of the procedures of the department affected, and result in changes in those procedures to make the best use of the new system. The installation of an automated acquisitions system, Innovacq 100, in the Acquisitions Department of the University of Central Florida Library demanded that an examination and revision of the procedures for book ordering be undertaken. At the same time, the manual describing the procedures had to be rewritten.

Although any work environment requires a procedures manual, one that is being rewritten as the result of the introduction of an automated system raises other considerations. The automated system should streamline work flow and eliminate many tedious tasks. It should reduce the paper files retained. The manual that results from the examination of the procedures should not be a rewritten version of the pre-automation procedures that simply superimposes automation on a paper system. Instead, the procedures should take full advantage of the automation, allowing it to do many of the tasks previously done manually, and the final product should differ in substantive ways, not just in detail, from the previous edition.

Since procedures change constantly as staff and tasks change, the manual requires frequent updating. And as each worker should have his or her own copy of the manual, the updating can become a problem. Traditionally, this has been solved by producing the manual in loose-leaf format, so that changes can be effected by replacing only the pertinent pages. Several copies of such manuals can be produced by in-office copying devices.

An even more satisfactory method is now available, however. The manual can be written on a disk, using a word processor, with each section stored as a file. As many copies as necessary of the complete manual or sections of it, can be printed out, and revision can be made quickly and easily.

The steps followed in developing a new manual were: first, an examination of the existing manual; second, preliminary proposal of new procedures; third, development and refinement of procedures while using the new system; fourth, collection and editing; fifth, writing procedures to disk; sixth, printing and distribution of manual.

Background and Significance:

This problem involves the use of four digital computer systems to solve two problems in information management. The first problem is the quantity of information used and stored by the department ordering books for a large university library with a book budget of $500,000. The library's catalog is online on the CLSI system. This system contains over 400,000 records and must be searched before each title is ordered. Also used is the OCLC system, a nationwide system of over nine million bibliographic records. From these, the one record for a book to be ordered must be found. The new system, Innovacq 100, is an acquisitions system. It replaced a labor intensive, paper-based manual system. Innovacq accepts the transfer of bibliographic records from OCLC, prints purchase orders, maintains files of materials on order, maintains vendor records and fund accounts, and produces numerous management reports.

The second problem was the need for revised procedures to use the new system to greatest advantage and for a new procedures manual describing the new procedures. It was apparent that the most satisfactory method to produce and keep current this manual was through the use of word processing technology.

Although the literature on procedures manuals for libraries is sparse, what was available was useful. All writers agree that a procedures manual is necessary, that every worker needs a copy, and that it must frequently be updated.

The advantages of a procedures manual are many and have been enumerated both by Kaczmarek and by Wender. Each points out that the process of writing the manual forces the examination and analysis of the system. It reveals organization, or the lack of it, defines levels of responsibility, and relationships of tasks and positions (Kaczmarek, 1978:17; Wender, 1977:407).

Both writers also point out the importance of a written procedures manual for training new personnel. As Wender says:

> It aids in an orderly transition of duties from one individual to another. Because the procedures are written down, it alleviates the problem of a poor teacher passing on incorrect information about how the job should be performed (Wender, 1977:407).

With the need for a written procedures manual established, the next questions are, who is to write it and how is it to be done? The supervisor begins the writing of the manual and compiles the completed document. The writing of the separate parts, however, may best be done by the individuals who do the tasks. Depending on the level of responsibility of these individuals and their training and experience, such description should be done with more or less consultation with and approval by the supervisor (Driscoll, 1981:111).

Kaczmarek asserts that the manual should be written in "a simple direct style ... It should be easy to read, arranged in a simple, easy-to-use style, and present step-by-step instructions for each procedure" (Kaczmarek, 1978:19).

Kaczmarek offers the following guidelines:

1. Use the command style of writing rather than the indirect style.

2. Make it personal. Use personal pronouns when needed, avoid using rigid and formal phrases.

3. Be brief. Avoid repetition, excess words, and elaborate phraseology.

4. Use active verbs. Avoid passive verbs, especially forms of "to be".

5. Instead of combining several ideas into one sentence, use several short sentences.

6. Provide examples, charts, diagrams, and illustrations when needed.

7. Use main headings, divisional headings and subheadings to break up the material into understandable units.

8. Include actual forms.

9. Prepare a complete and detailed index (Kaczmarek, 1978:19).

Besides the literature on procedures manuals, what was available on the Innovacq 100 system was reviewed. An article on using OCLC for pre-order searching was read also.

Procedures:

In preparation for the installation of the new system, the old procedures manual was reviewed and evaluated. Not only was the manual written for a system no longer to be used, it had other defects. It was wordy, often difficult to understand, and inconsistent in style. On the other hand, it contained many examples and was well-organized. The analysis of the manual clarified the results desired from each procedure, and made possible the formulation of procedures to obtain the desired results from Innovacq. For instance, if a paper file was described, it was ascertained what the use and purpose of that file was, if that use and purpose was needed or desired, and how Innovacq could provide the same information.

After the system was installed, the Department Head and senior personnel began using it. This was a period of experimentation and consultation among members of the department, and with staff in other departments affected. Procedures were written, used, and revised.

When all procedures had ceased developing, they were collected by the Department Head, edited, and organized into a manual intended to be easily used.

One aim in writing the new manual was to make directions clear and concise. Explanations and definitions are left out; they certainly are needed, but in another context. The result is a manual divided into four parts: procedures and supplementary instructions, examples, lists, and glossary.

The procedures, as indicated above, are succinct, step-by-step instructions for individual tasks. Supplementary instructions expand on instructions given in the procedures. Lists are lists of vendors, lists of funds, and so on. The glossary explains terminology and abbreviations used in the procedures such as "vendor", "OCLC", "open entry".

Examples of forms used and printouts obtained are placed in one section, as many pertain to more than one procedure.

The manual as described above was recorded to disk using an Apple IIe microcomputer and Applewriter word processing program. Each section was saved as a separate file so that it could easily be revised and printed out separately when needed.

A preliminary printout was made and reviewed by all members of the department. Suggested revisions and corrections were made, and a final copy produced. From this copy, the Department Head compiled an index, which was easily appended.

Results:

As a result of the procedures described above, a manual was developed, produced, and distributed.

Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations:

The procedure of installing an automated acquisitions system and writing a new procedures manual for its use was advantageous in a number of ways. Because every task was examined and analyzed, it was possible to eliminate some procedures that accomplished no useful purpose. Files that were never consulted were eliminated. Full advantage was taken of the capabilities and features of the Innovacq system. For example, elaborate routines were followed to provide statistics on vendor performance and types of materials purchased. Innovacq was able to provide these statistics, so the routines were abandoned. Making full use of Innovacq has made it possible for a smaller staff to order and receive greater quantities of materials and still maintain better, more accessible, files and records.

It is recommended that all departments of the library develop procedures manuals using similar methods. Such an exercise should result in improved efficiency and effectiveness throughout the library.

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